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In former years the Khásiás were great iron-smelters, and enormous excavations in the most favourable localities for obtaining ironstone prove the extent to which this manufacture was carried on. In some places the whole surface of the ground appears to have been dug up for a depth of several feet, leaving huge boulders standing up here and there. Of late years, however, as the price of labour in the Hills has risen, the trade in iron has died away, and there is now little demand for the Khásí article, the cheaper English metal having driven it out of the market.

NATURAL PHENOMENA.—Many peculiar caves and caverns are found in the limestone rock formation, the most notable being the caves at Cherrá Púnji and at Rúpnáth in Amwi. At the latter place the caverns extend a great distance beneath the earth, one being imagined by the people to reach as far as China, and a Hindu legend states that a Chinese army once marched by this route to the invasion of India. In another cave, the limestone stalactites have been carved into images representing the gods of the Hindu pantheon. On the banks of the Kapilí river on the Cáchár border, at a place called Sumir, there is a hot spring, the water of which contains carbonate of lime. All the rivers in the Hills flow through gorges in certain parts of their course, the most picturesque being at Tehriá, where a small stream is compressed into deep pools among limestone rocks; and at Darrang and Borghát, where the Mangat and Mantideo rivers respectively debouch upon the plains.

FORESTS, ETC.—The India-rubber or caoutchouc tree is found in many forests throughout the Hills, but not in great numbers, and the supply and value of the gum has much decreased of late years. In 1870 the right of tapping the trees in the Jáintiá Hills was leased out for a sum of £36, 12s. 0d.; but by 1876 the trade had almost entirely ceased. There are some tracts of timber forest on the lower hills towards the Brahmaputra valley, but through the want of water carriage they are of no great value. Vigorous efforts are being made to preserve the forests in the higher plateaux. Owing to the habit of firing the jungle in spring prior to sowing, great waste of valuable timber has taken place; but since the country has been separated from Bengal and placed under the administration of the Chief Commissioner of Assam, attention has been given to the matter, and special areas are now being set apart for the preservation and growth of forest timber. Cinnamon grows wild in some parts of the country. There is a considerable trade carried on in

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at Rs. 480,000, or £48,000, and the revenue derived by Government from the quarries was Rs. 67,266, or £6726. In addition, the Khásí Chiefs receive a revenue from this source of more than £2000.

IRON.—The smelting of iron was once the chief industry in the Khásí Hills, and a considerable quantity of the metal used to be exported into Sylhet, both in the crude and the manufactured state. Recently, however, this industry has almost died out, in the face of the competition of the superior article imported from England and sold in the plains at a cheaper rate. The indigenous methods of extracting, washing, and smelting the ore have been minutely described by Professor Oldham. The following description is taken from Mr. Allen's Report, dated 1858, at which date the annual export of smelted iron was estimated at 45,000 *maunds*, valued at Rs. 67,500, or £6750, at the rate of Rs. 1. 8 per *maund*:—'The ore is said to be most abundant and of the best quality in the State of Khyrim, especially at the villages of Nongkrím and Noyandrí. A few iron articles, such as *dáos* or hill knives, *koddlís* or mattocks, spear and arrow-heads, are manufactured by the Khásí smiths in the Hills; but the greater bulk of the smelted iron is sent to the plains for sale in circular lumps weighing about 4 or 5 *sers*. These lumps, called *bird*, sell at Chhaták for from Rs. 1. 4 to Rs. 1. 6 per *maund*. The best iron, however, which is beaten into bars called *peti*, sells for from Rs. 1. 10 to Rs. 1. 12 per *maund*. Khásí iron is preferred to English, in consequence of its greater malleability. It is much used by the native boat-builders of Sylhet and the neighbouring Districts to make fastenings for the timbers of their boats. When brought into the market, it is more than half dross, and it is this circumstance which renders the iron trade unprofitable. The cost of carriage from the Hills to the plains is about 6 *dnnás* per *maund*; and the traders, who are all Khásiás themselves, affirm that they get an average profit of only 2 *dnnás* per *maund*.' The tables of trade for 1876-77 return no smelted iron as exported from the Hills, but Rs. 7000 of iron implements exported, against nails and ironmongery imported to the value of Rs. 18,000.

THE MANUFACTURES of the District, besides iron, consist of coarse cotton and *rundia* cloth, plain silver work, rude implements of husbandry, netted bags made of the fibre of the pine-apple, common pottery, and mats and baskets. With the exception of the